

socialist standard

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Labouring under illusions

Labour 1945 - 2015



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We use every possible opportunity

to make new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join The Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our

ideas across, the more experiences we will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

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JULY 2015

Editorial

Labour's strange 'revolution'

LABOUR'S ELECTORAL victory, 70 years ago this month, was a strange sort of revolution.

Since 1940, the Labour Party had been in power as part of the wartime coalition. 1945 saw them merely increase their share of the political cake. Clement Attlee, for instance, previously Deputy Prime Minister under Churchill, moved up a step. Similarly, Herbert Morrison, who had run the home front during the war, continued to run the home front during the peace. Morrison, Home Security during the war, stepped into Attlee's shoes as Deputy Prime Minister.

Amongst rank and file Labour MPs elected in 1945, there were dozens of majors and lieutenants - the officer class - and not a single private. The very ordinary elite remained quite firmly in control of the political establishment.

Labour's crowning glory of '45 is seen as the creation of the so-called welfare state, in particular the National Health Service.

Although associated with the Labour Party, in fact all capitalist parties supported the drive for reorganisation of 'social security' - the provision of housing, health and education, and of unemployment and old age payments. Beveridge, whose report formed the basis for the social security reforms after 1945, was a Liberal. The Education Act of 1944, which established free compulsory secondary education for all, was the work of the Tory 'Rab' Butler.

To the capitalist class, it was evident that the existing system needed reform. A patchwork quilt of measures enacted over a century was unsystematic and hence

inefficient - particularly in cost terms. Loopholes existed through which workers could gain more than they 'needed'.

And the welfare state also brought them benefits. The war had revealed serious flaws in the health of the 'nation'. The British Tommy, with his rotten teeth and pigeon chest, became an object of derision. This was a bad for fighting - and for working when peace returned. Something had to be done. In 1943, arch-capitalist Sir Samuel Courtauld freely admitted that social security 'will ultimately lead to higher efficiency among them and a lowering of production costs'. Healthy workers make healthy profits.

The welfare state, the promise of a 'better world' tomorrow was also a carrot, an incentive to increase production - and killing - during the war. The Beveridge Report honestly declared 'each individual citizen is more likely to concentrate upon his war effort if he feels that his Government will be ready in time with plans for that better world'. It was a promise that had to be fulfilled to avoid social unrest and conflict.

However, like all reforms, the measures that constituted the welfare state were always viewed by the capitalist class as subject to requirements. As early as 1951, the Labour government introduced the first charges on its own supposedly free National Health Service.

The welfare state and the NHS may have benefited the workers, but that was not the intention. The intention was to maximise profits, to increase the welfare of the capitalist class. So far as revolution was involved, the reforms were an attempt to avoid it.

Enema of the people

SOMETHING FUNNY is going on with the current craze for faecal transplants. For those not already in the know, this is the decorous practice of shoving someone else's poo up your behind, an unlikely but ancient stratagem which is delivering an astonishing 90 percent clear-up rate for clostridium difficile and some other potentially fatal infections not treatable by any antibiotic.

Faecal matter transplanting (FMT) definitely seems to be the business, and because there are no issues with immune rejection nor, up to now, any clinical oversight, anybody can do it with a home-made enema, and anybody's poo will do, provided the donor is fit and healthy.

Clearly the 'yuk factor' has been trumped by the statistical 'Wow factor' as clinical trials through the last two years have largely confirmed FMT's efficacy in treating certain bacterial conditions and people have stampeded to get the treatment. In 2012 a group of MIT researchers opened the world's first stool bank. Oral forms are being investigated for wider pill dissemination. For once, it seems, there's a cure for something that's natural, freely available, and out of which the drug companies simply cannot make any money.

But after the first flush of success, worries are now emerging. For one thing, the DIY nature of FMT makes it unregulatable, so there are no controls over who is donating what to whom, or in what circumstances, meaning that far from curing infections FMT might be promoting them. For another, the claims have got wilder. FMT doesn't just cure c.diff, it cures everything from Parkinson's to asthma to cancer to MS to mental disorders to obesity, according to unverified reports. Yet counter-signs have emerged. In February this year, a woman with a history of being thin became clinically obese after a FMT procedure in which the donor was obese (<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/289085.php>). In a recent *New Scientist* survey, 15 of 52 responses from practitioners reported 'unexpected symptoms' following treatment.

The US and Canada are now imposing regulatory guidelines (*New Scientist*, 6 June), after ludicrous efforts to have poo classified as a drug for regulatory purposes provoked an outcry. The UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is following suit. But such measures are unlikely to achieve much, as the nature and seriousness of any 'side-effects' remain unknown while the FMT craze continues to run away with itself.

It would be a shame if the current 'poo-rush' mentality ultimately ruined the credibility of this useful form of treatment and demoted it to snake-oil status, as happened in the west in the 1920s with bacteriophage therapies. But it's interesting how people can change their minds so rapidly over such unlikely things. Five years ago, you wouldn't have put money on this treatment ever becoming acceptable. Social prejudice, you would have thought, would have been too strong.

Considering that people routinely shove other people's shit into their heads on a daily basis through the news media business, perhaps we shouldn't be so surprised. Yet people seem alarmingly resistant to changing their ideas when it is in their urgent interest to do so. In a recent study, 2,000 parents were divided into 4 groups and given different leaflets designed to determine whether pro-vaccination campaigns could change

their attitudes towards vaccinations. One leaflet focussed on the lack of evidence linking the MMR jab with autism, the second emphasised the dangers of measles, mumps and rubella, the third carried photos of children with the diseases and the fourth was a case study of a child who almost died. A control group were not sent any of the leaflets. What was the outcome? Nothing. No change at all. 'It's depressing', said one of the researchers, 'we were definitely depressed' (*New Yorker*, 16 May 2014).

Other studies show that people's ingrained biases can be heavily resistant to change even when the facts are known to the subjects, suggesting that people resolve cases of cognitive dissonance by ditching the facts and sticking to their beliefs.

Well, not in the case of poo, apparently. And not if one takes a larger view either. The fact is, if people were as resistant to changing their ideas as some depressed researchers would

have us believe, the human race would still be living in caves doing finger-paintings on the walls for amusement. Of course people don't like being contradicted, or having their precious beliefs scrutinised, picked apart or mocked. Of course they feel threatened, and so of course they'll resort to irrational defences like ignoring reality. Is the answer to this some sort of self-affirmative mollicoddling, as some researchers think, where you bathe the subject in a warm glow of self-admiration before gently encouraging them to think again about their assumptions? No, it's not. The answer to people who won't face reality is to slap them in the face with reality, very hard, and as often as possible.

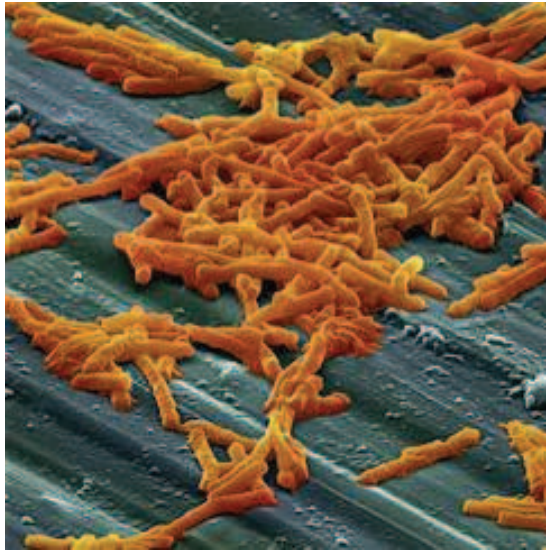
A case in point arose just last month, when a Nobel laureate who

should have known better was excoriated in the press for making jokes about women in the science lab being cry-babies who were always falling in love and, therefore by implication, not being very at science. The professor, no doubt thinking he was making a hilarious joke, was astonished to find himself forced to resign by his university. TV's wonder boy of physics Brian Cox immediately leapt into the fray to describe the forced resignation as 'disproportionate', implying that the remarks while 'serious' were effectively a minor peccadillo and not worth making a fuss about.

But was the public reaction disproportionate? Was it a collective failure to appreciate a humorous moment of professional bonhomie? No, it wasn't. Prejudice and bigotry never use their own names, they always pass themselves off as harmless jokes, trying to sneak under the radar of social disapprobation. That's why, periodically, some out-of-touch lecturer thinks he can stand up and tell us that women are no good at science and get away with it, even though there's nothing scientific about this statement and even though the treatment of women in science has historically been and continues to be a disgrace to the discipline.

Ideas like sexism, racism and all the other isms which get in the way of social progress are certainly resistant to change, but change they must, and not by people being softly-softly or touchy-feely. The only way to do it is to expose these ideas for the shit they are, and then invite their exponents to shove them somewhere the sun doesn't shine, preferably with a home enema kit. In the long run, it will certainly be good for them.

PJS



Clostridium perhaps not so difficile after all?

Liberty, Levelling and Lies

MUCH OF the story of the United States of America's founding is a total lie. The War of Independence can be described as a civil war between the various forces within American society. The United States remained a society of disparities in wealth.

Income and wealth were as inequitably distributed in the United States in 1800 as in British America in 1776—this despite the confiscation of 2,200 loyalist estates and the opening up of the West to settlement. Europeans visiting the United States in the years following the War of Independence wrote of hovels from which emerged the impoverished and undernourished of the new republic. 'Instead of the lands being

qualified by property, nor was holding office, and a judiciary appointed by the legislature for seven-year terms, and removable at any time. Some radicals, such as Thomas Young, even pushed for a provision in the state constitution limiting how much property any one person could own. That, however, was narrowly defeated and removed by more conservative influences. It called to form a 'new government ... on the authority of the people alone'. Out of it emerged the most democratic constitution of the time, guaranteeing freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the vote for all male taxpayers resident for a year or more. There was no Governor, but there were annual elections for the House of Representatives and all bills were printed so people outside the immediate political process could consider them. It was viciously denounced by the wealthy as 'a mobocracy of the most illiterate'.

It was this threat that led James Madison, the fourth US president, to warn of the perils of democracy, saying too much of it would jeopardise the property of the landed aristocracy. 'In England,' he observed, 'if elections were open to all classes of people, the property of the landed proprietors would be insecure.' Land would be redistributed to the landless, he cautioned. Without the rich exercising monopoly privileges over the commons, the masses would be less dependent on elites like them.

The first constitution of the United States (the Articles of Confederation) endured for 10 years, starting in 1778, before being circumvented. In February 1787, the richest man in the United States, George Washington, proposed a convention in May in Philadelphia for the alleged purposes of revising the Articles of Confederation. In their place was proposed a new, second Constitution of the United States, which included a powerful federal government to rule over the state governments, a president for life (a king!), a senate appointed for life (peers!), an electoral college that elects the president and an appointed for life Supreme Court (Law Lords) with authority over the state courts. Because of opposition the terms of office were subsequently limited.

The Philadelphia Convention, widely heralded today as the birth of democracy, was essentially a coup against it. America was divided between the moneyed interests which supported the new federal government and popular dissent which objected to the loss of local power and the rising supremacy of the rich. The Anti-Federalists were overpowered by the media apparatus and political influence of the oligarchs, who convinced commercial interests, small landowners, farmers, merchants and artisans to side with them. What happened at Liberty Hall in 1787 was that the wealthy elites empowered themselves to regulate commerce to their own advantage, enshrining their rule under the empty rhetoric of liberty.

To praise the oppressors of the time as spokesmen for liberty is to forget actual real history and fall victim to propaganda of the ruling class ideology which camouflages plutocracy by creating the form and appearance of popular government yet under private control. Those who argue that the Founding Fathers were motivated by high-minded ideals ignore the fact that it was they themselves who repeatedly stated their intention to create a government strong enough to protect the 'haves' from the 'have-nots'. They gave voice to the crassest class prejudices and at no time denied the fact that their concern was to thwart popular control and resist all tendencies toward class 'levelling'.

ALJO



equally divided, immense estates are held by a few individuals,' observed a traveller in rural Virginia in the 1790s, 'whilst the generality of the people are but in a state of mediocrity.' The historian Robert Wiebe argues, 'the Revolution actually strengthened gentry rule by channeling popular ferment toward the British and the American Tories'.

Marxists call the American Revolution a 'capitalist' revolution. This means that the revolution put the American capitalist class in power and accomplished many things that the capitalist class needed to have done. It unified the colonies, ended all of the restrictions on the growth of capitalism, set up a government that would protect capitalist property and so forth. But when we call this revolution a 'capitalist revolution' that does not mean that the capitalists themselves led this revolution, or even that a majority of the capitalist class supported it. As a matter of fact, the revolution was mainly made by other classes. It was even made against the will of the majority of the capitalist class of that day, the merchants.

In the 1770s and 80s, something revolutionary was stirring in the colonies. It was a people's movement for political democracy. In public meetings and town halls, ordinary citizens were gathering to discuss how to govern themselves. Town meetings, long an institution in New England, were taken out of the hands of the propertied voters by the general city population. Although there were only 1,500 people in Boston entitled by property qualifications to attend town meetings and vote, attendance reached two and three thousand, and in days of crisis, six or seven thousand.

In 1776 a conference in Pennsylvania proposed a new constitution with annual parliaments in which voting wasn't



Religion and mythology

YOU KNOW what it's like when you have a job done but due to a design fault, shoddy workmanship or whatever, something goes wrong and you have to get it done all over again? Well imagine the hassle transgender Christians will be in for if the fears of one vicar are realised.

Newly baptised babies, it seems, may be in for a shock as they lay there gurgling away, naively expecting that the pantomime they've just been through - where the vicar has chanted some mumbo-jumbo and splashed them with holy water - has now been completed; and that they can go home, have a nap and get on with their lives.. Little do these little innocents realise that if at some point, maybe thirty or forty years in the future, they decide to have a sex change, apart from all the other problems they may face, their baptism will now be bugged, no longer be fit for purpose, and will need re-doing. And while these church christening fonts are quite big enough for even the chubbiest, bonny bouncing baby, you try cramming a bewildered and possibly agitated adult into one.

According to a report in the *Guardian* (22 May) following a request by the vicar of Lancaster Priory, the Church of England is to consider plans for a new baptism ceremony for Christians who have undergone a sex change. One such upgrade was required by a member of his flock, he said, 'where we could introduce him to God with his new name and his new identity'. Well, God may be all-knowing but he's bound to be confused by this sort of thing isn't he?

This is interesting though because baptism, in its various forms, is one of those rituals that can be traced back to its pagan origins in mythology, and there have been problems right from the start.

The Greek hero Achilles you may remember if you were paying attention at school, who was born to Thetis, an immortal sea-goddess, and Peleus a mortal, had to be dipped in the river Styx, whose water had magical powers, in order for him to acquire the immortality enjoyed by his mother's side of the family. Unfortunately she dangled him by the ankle which, not being submerged remained susceptible to human death. (He was subsequently killed after being hit in the heel by an arrow).

Readers of the Bible will recognise this river dipping ritual as the same as the one performed by John the Baptist on Jesus (although Jesus probably wasn't dangled by the ankle). When he was ducked in the river by John, we are told, God boomed from the heavens that 'This is my beloved son', etc.

The seemingly modern idea, too, of being 'born

again', to 'cleanse one of their sins', is another variation of this. In the ancient Greek world if someone who had been mistakenly presumed dead, and handed over to the god of the underworld, later turned up alive and well (something that must have been fairly common where skirmishes with neighbouring tribes was a normal way of life) in order to keep the misfortunes of the underworld away, before being re-admitted into the community they had to go through an elaborate re-birth ritual to convince the gods of their revived mortal status.

Another ancient ritual, carried out for the same purpose, required the person being 'born again' to spend a night crouched in a large tub. Over this the rituals normally performed for pregnant women were carried out.

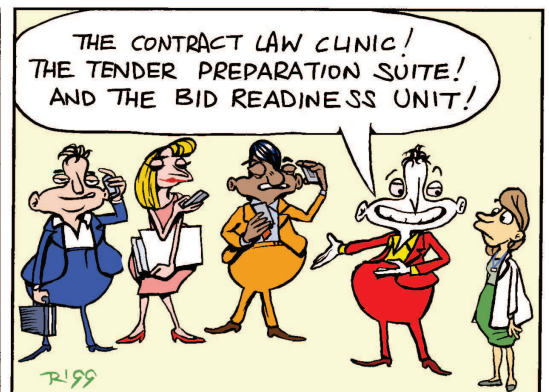
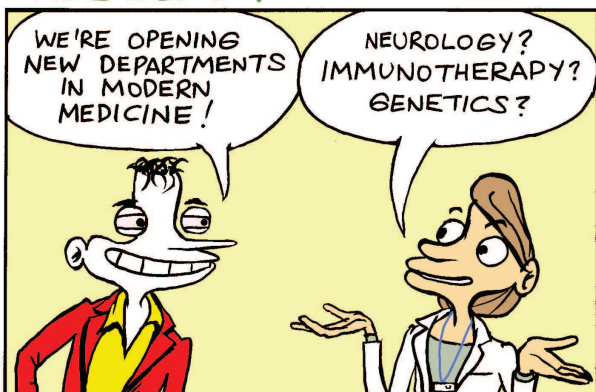
It's good to see that there's still a decent living to be made out of paganism and mythology isn't it?

NW



Jordan Water - for baptisms on the go

FREE LUNCH



Marx right about what?

'MARX WAS Right' was the title of the text of the opening speech at a conference of leftwingers in New York in May (www.truthdig.com/report/item/karl_marx_was_right_20150531). This is certainly a welcome change from the usual 'Marx was Wrong' found in economics textbooks. But there was a problem: the speaker, Chris Hedges, was wrong about what he thought Marx got right.

Marx, he claimed, 'saw that there would come a day when capitalism would exhaust its potential and collapse'. Marx certainly didn't think that capitalism would last for ever as he saw it as a passing phase in the history of humanity. Hedges, however, commits Marx to the view that capitalism will one day collapse economically (actually he thinks it's already happening):

'... as Marx warned, there is a limit to an economy built on scaffolding of debt expansion. There comes a moment, Marx knew, when there would be no new markets available and no new pools of people who could take on more debt. (...) The hoarding of wealth by a tiny capitalist elite, Marx foresaw, along with the exploitation of workers, meant that the masses could no longer buy the products that propelled capitalism forward.'

This suggests that capitalism will eventually collapse through a lack of market demand on the part of 'the masses' whether from their pay or from what they have borrowed. The trouble with this theory is that it doesn't explain why capitalism hasn't already collapsed, long ago, since the market demand of 'the masses' has always been limited because a part of what is produced goes to the exploiting capitalist class as profits. In fact, what they can't buy, the capitalists can. They don't always do, but that only causes the periodic economic slumps that are a feature of capitalism not the collapse of the whole system.

To attribute such an incoherent view to Marx is not doing him a favour. It also assumes that the aim of production under capitalism is to meet the needs that people can pay for, that capitalism is an economic system geared to meeting paying consumer demand. Marx, on the other hand, analysed capitalism as being geared to making profits, where money is invested in production with a view to profit, most of which is then reinvested as further capital.

For Marx, what 'propels capitalism forward' is capitalist firms seeking profits, not what non-capitalists buy. So, if capitalism were going to collapse it would have to be from a lack of profits rather than a lack of markets. But Marx didn't hold that view either.

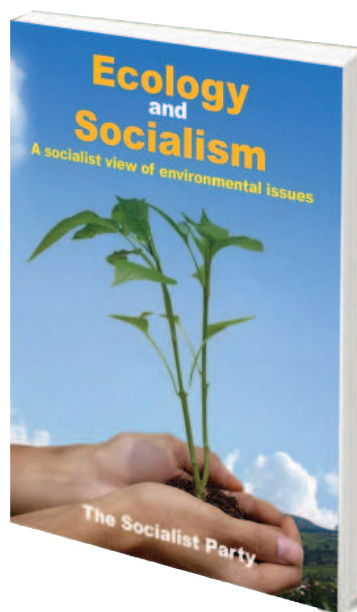
In his main work, Volume I of *Capital*, Marx does set out (at the end of Chapter 32 on 'The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation') how he thought capitalism would eventually come to an end. Economics was still involved, but it was neither a lack of markets nor a lack of profits. It was the concentration and centralisation of the means of production operated co-operatively by a collective labour force. This would come into conflict with the continuing class ownership of the means of production, a contradiction that would express itself in a 'revolt of the working class'. It would be resolved when 'the expropriators are expropriated' by the workers transforming 'capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialised production, into socialised property', ushering in a society based 'on cooperation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production.'

In short, capitalism would have to be collapsed not collapse. It would not self-destruct, but would have to be purposefully replaced by a new society.

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Stateless in capitalism



HAVING A nationality is something so natural that people rarely stop to think about what life would be like without it. Stateless people have no nationality and are not accepted as citizens by any country. With no ID, they are deprived of basic rights and vulnerable to exploitation and human traffickers. Stateless people have no rights to the basics most people take for granted such as health-care, education and employment. They cannot travel, open bank accounts, buy a house or car, or even get married. The current tragedy taking place with the Rohingya refugees has at its root cause with the Burmese government's refusal to acknowledge the Rohingya as citizens (they even dispute the actual term, insisting they be called Bengali).

A stateless person is someone who is not considered as a national by any state. Being stateless means individuals have no legal identity, no passport, no vote, and few or no opportunities to get an education. Without documents, it is impossible to register marriage, so family life is affected. Travelling is difficult, and simple things like opening a bank account or getting a driving licence are impossible. Many find themselves stuck in a legal limbo, and can find themselves facing detention and destitution, unable to work formally, living at the margins of society. The stateless often face insoluble problems over property rights or the custody of children. They live in constant fear of being expelled from a country or sometimes resort to fleeing and split up their families in a desperate attempt to resolve their children's statelessness. In 27 countries women are denied the right to pass on their nationality to their children on an equal basis as men.

At least 10 million people worldwide have no nationality. Thailand is home to more than 500,000 stateless people in its population of nearly 70 million. The Dominican Republic in 2013 applied new nationality criteria retroactively and affected the nationality status of tens of thousands of people of Haitian descent born in the Dominican Republic. While in Europe, Estonia and Latvia, ex-Soviet Union republics, have some 91,000 and 267,000 stateless people respectively.

For generations, Roma families living in mahalas (neighborhoods) in the Balkans have passed down their houses to relatives through informal means. It is uncommon for these inheritances to be properly registered or to have official legal titles. These same families often forgo registering the birth of a child with local authorities, as the cost of obtaining a birth

certificate can be prohibitive. Without official identification documents or legal claims to their property, Roma families in the region are at increased risk of statelessness. The problem only worsened with the decades of conflict that have plagued the Balkans. The Roma now living in refugee camps can neither prove their previous legal residence in Kosovo nor meet the necessary requirements to obtain citizenship in Montenegro.

The UNHCR believes a stateless baby is born every 10 minutes.

We should contrast the persecution of the poor stateless person with the luxury and liberty of the elite group of the world's voluntary stateless super-rich. They transcend geographical boundaries to purchase properties in major cities across the globe. With few ties to specific countries, these individuals lead nomadic, season-driven lives. Their choice of where to live at any one time is based on climate, their children's education, tax constraints or which of their friends they want to lunch with on any particular day. This global lifestyle has led to the stateless super-rich buying a larger portion of the world's most expensive homes as they look to park their wealth in perceived havens. They own multiple properties, usually consisting of two in their country of principal residence, one in a global city such as London, Paris or New York, and a holiday home by the beach or perhaps in the mountains.

'The more money you have, the more rootless you become because everything is possible,' says Jeremy Davidson, a property consultant. 'I have clients who wake up in the morning and say, 'Let's go to Venice for lunch.' If you've got that sort of money the world becomes a very small place. They tend to have a diminished sense of place, of where their roots are,' he told the *Financial Times* (28 April, 2012).

The World Socialist Movement stands opposed to the nation-state and advocates a world in which everyone will be 'stateless' but that has nothing in common with statelessness under capitalism as described above. While states exist all workers living in one, whether citizens, stateless or citizens of another state, are fellow workers who should treat each other and be treated as the same.

To emancipate ourselves, we, the working class must come to realise that we have no country and come together to engage in a world-wide class struggle against the capitalist class.

ALJO



Labour Pains

EMERGING FROM the dust of defeat ... 'We are an army bruised, beaten, bewildered...' Ed Miliband's leadership reinvigorated long-term

activists and inspired a new generation of campaigners alike, restoring a sense of hope that Labour could be a party to not only change governments but also change lives...' But then... 'We cannot pretend we won the popular vote, more people chose the Conservatives over us'. But a month later, in less incendiary mood, a piece in *The Guardian* cast doubt on the effectiveness of the six million doorstep 'conversations' so valued by Miliband as evidence of the party's superior ground view: 'Five and a half million of them could have been "can you go away please, I've got the washing on?"' So why the change of emphasis? Stella Creasy – who was of interest to *The Greasy Pole* a couple of years ago – has announced herself, after only five years on the Back Benches, as a candidate for Deputy Leader of the beaten and bewildered party. She is up against some serious, hardened opposition – for example Ben Bradshaw, Angela Eagle, Caroline Flint, all of them carrying bruises from similar defeat and confusion in the past.

Red Socks

Creasy came into Parliament in the 2010 election, the MP for Walthamstow. In a pretty tough London constituency like that it must have helped that her parents are stolidly Labour but not that she has an aristocratic background – on her mother's side the Earl of Carlisle, the Cayzers and the Viscount Gort. In her education she had to overcome a less than promising start; at a posh all-girl grammar school she failed her Eleven Plus and, perhaps to demonstrate her blossoming reputation as a rebel, was ejected from an assembly when, in defiance of the school's navy blue uniform, she flaunted red socks. When her family moved to another area she began to demonstrate her abilities and after Cambridge took a PhD at the London School of Economics on *Understanding the Lifeworld of Social Exclusion* – an intriguing title in contrast with her subsequent career in justifying and tolerating the social exclusion and pressures typical of capitalism's class divide. Before she made it as an MP she worked among other things writing speeches for some tediously disciplined Blair ministers such as Charles Clarke and Douglas Alexander – one of Labour's casualties in Scotland who recently assessed Creasy as '...clearly reimagining the work of an MP... I see her as a genuine pioneer of a new way of doing politics'. Which might have been more impressive as a compliment if Alexander had himself shown so novel a tendency.



Stella Creasy

Threats

Meanwhile Creasy displayed a persistent talent for reaching into the limelight. At first disappointed at being overlooked for a place as a Shadow Minister she filled the gaps in her publicity by taking the lead in a number

of media-alluring campaigns. There was the matter of demanding, with the journalist Caroline Criado-Perez, that in the name of equal rights an issue of new bank notes should display the portrait of a woman – which was settled when the Bank of England agreed to use the image of Jane Austen. But a side effect of this was to reveal the existence of some equally passionate people on the other side of the question; Creasy and Criado-Perez were subjected to a virulent stream of abuse and threats of rape and other violence, for which a man was recently sent to prison for four months. Creasy has also turned her attention to the scandal of Pay Day Loans, which have often been the last resort of people driven to desperation by the extremities of impoverishment through unemployment, zero-hour jobs and the like. This is indeed a fertile field of profit; in some cases borrowers have had to repay loans at an interest rate of 272 percent APR and, in the absence of competition, as much as 4000 percent. A leading light in this pitiless application of the profit motive is Wonga and their noxiously provocative TV promotion. Under pressure, Wonga tried to navigate themselves through a climb-down which involved nothing better than a promise to ease the plight of some of the worst affected of their victims.

Estate Agents

Up – or rather down – there with Wonga and the like are the estate agents, who are also revelling in the stress suffered by the victims of the recession. In Walthamstow Creasy organised a local survey of the estate agents and their treatment of borrowers. The result was striking: one firm came out high on approval rating while another was at the very lowest end of the scale. Creasy's response was to visit the office of this last firm and publicly berate them for their relentless pressure on local people who were struggling to afford to buy a property. The firm concerned could only plead that they are the largest in the area, on the assumption that this was a sound argument for their ruthless policy and that the most favoured agent was just a beginner who will soon fall into the same practices as the rest – because that is what making profit is all about. This campaign has met with the approval of the Walthamstow voters, who at the last election increased Creasy's majority to 23,195. But meanwhile the chaos and despair in the Labour Party acts as a fertiliser for ambitions to inherit what historically remains after Miliband, Gordon Brown, Blair, Callaghan and their failure to modify the inexorable brutalities of the capitalist system. But Creasy is not ready to give up even though she has to endure life towards the lower end of the Greasy Pole. In this she has not always been as popular as she might have planned. 'Now she's a public figure and there's a party line she has to toe' was the opinion of a friend. 'She cares about her constituents but she cares about herself more' said a party member, and 'Since when has Stella been interested in the fucking Post Office?' asked a Tory Member after listening to one of her verbal barrages on that subject. Other opinions were: 'pushing too hard... haranguing...too big for her boots'. Within the Commons she has earned two nicknames: there is St Ella to match her adopted pious style and, noting how futile it has been among all those others so desperate to somehow slither upwards, Stella Greasy.

IVAN



Confessions of a baby boomer

I couldn't give a monkey's about the inheritance tax proposal. Not to say I have anything against Mr & Mrs Concerned – with tuition fees, housing costs, insecure employment, and poor social services (among other things). It's a rough world out there and I can see why you'd want to do the best for your kids. I love my kids too, and I don't want them exposed to the chill winds coming from the future. However I think the best way of future-proofing them doesn't revolve around petty reforms like this. Unfortunately it is big picture time ... or else.

As a baby boomer I'm one of the lucky ones. My peers and I grew up in a world where we were still carried on the tide of the post-war settlement which gave us a reasonably secure place to grow up in. Put aside the Cold War (and the proxy third world war being waged in Vietnam, Angola, etc) and the so-called industrial strife and there was a society which had plenty of jobs with often life-

long security giving enough money to meet your needs and a little bit more; there was plenty of council housing; school places for all the children; cheap widespread public transport; predominantly free health service and not too much of a wait for treatment; free higher education with grants (remember those?). We weren't bombarded with adverts reminding us of our inadequacies, to be solved by material acquisition or bodily adjustments.

I grew up in London where most of my friends were like me – in rented accommodation and none too affluent – and before you ask, about 50 percent non-white UK. Learning in my first year of secondary school about pollution came as a bit of a shock to me: everything seemed fine, so what a shame there was this issue. But despite the fact that it was known about in the late 60s, as we all know nothing of any significant value has been done about it; reckoning was still a long

way off. The 60s and 70s, despite what the Tory rewrites of history tell you, were by comparison to today, fairly optimistic times: things did not get really dark until the 80s and Thatcher. Remember, prior to the Falklands and her magnificent PR exercise, hers was the most unpopular government that century, more unpopular than anyone else in the 70s.

Whilst I do think my parents' generation have things to answer for, I think we possibly have more. What has happened since the 70s? An orgy of consumption, largely fuelled by debt. Surprise surprise, the wheels came off with the banking crisis. Which was then used as an excuse for a rightwing agenda that the Tories had all along; shrink the state and transfer more from the poor to the rich. But I get ahead of myself. What happened in those intervening years? I think we need to go back again, and the question is what happened since the 1945 Attlee government. The massive state welfare edifice they created came about for a number of temporally unique conditions. These include a memory of the 30s and the rise of fascism, both amongst the workers and the rich; a very powerful state able to enact massive change; a disposition of states to spend money; in England at least a cabinet-in-waiting who were able to plan everything in advance of office. Here's the chance to create a 'capitalism with an acceptable face', and whilst I would argue that in fact they did not, nonetheless they created a society which gave us an attenuated version of it: some of the harsh corners had been blunted. Allied to this fact was the existence of the USSR which plainly offered an alternative view of the world; our society couldn't be that rough as otherwise it might encourage the serfs to go over to the other side.

Reforming capitalism doesn't work because you haven't changed the power base. Sooner or later the power of money will reassert itself and this gradually happened over the next 35 years, although it was disguised by the economic growth associated with peace time expansion and record defence spending. But even in the 70s differentials were not that great. I even recall the Tories arguing that the top rate of tax should be cut because high top rates meant that senior staff asked for greater pay rises as they saw less of it... (as history shows us, cutting the top rate in fact led to the explosion of top pay – greed once allowed knows

no bounds, eh?). Labour's 'In Place of Strife', and Heath's Industrial Relations Act started to erode labour power, i.e reassert the power of business. Then the baby boom, leading to the start of the property market boom, and the IMF bail-out, slashing public sector spending – as ever with the IMF – together with the nationalised industries withering on the vine of bad management and planning, and the clock is going backwards.

Enter Mrs Thatcher with her crusade of sweeping away the 'nanny state' and any vestiges of 'socialism' – the markets were let off the leash – and how many millions unemployed? The unemployed paid the price; the start of the increasing transfer of wealth from poor to rich and the

“If you look to a socialist alternative you might be bequeathing something of real value to your children and future generations”

driven turbo capitalism replete with uber-rich movers and shakers at Davos and Bilderberg and their agents at WTO and GATT and IMF. Well there was never any such thing as society anyway, eh? Everyone for themselves. Spend, spend, spend and get, get, get: that's the societal mores – the more you get the more you are. (Funny how I have never seen written on an epitaph 'he had lots of stuff' or 'she was soooo wealthy').

I quite liked the world I grew up

of the system, often in opposition to it. Game shows, celebs and loads of stuff; junk food and booze and legal highs; porn and more porn and endless pap on the multi-channel TV – 57 channels and nothing on, Springsteen said correctly. Zero hours contracts; poverty wages; housing crisis; student debts; most expensive rail fares in Europe; 4hrs+ waits in A&E; miss-selling PPI, worthless private pensions, and selling your own house to pay for your elderly care. And then there's the environment.

This is the inheritance that matters; a dysfunctional world which is heading for an environmental disaster; where because of the power of big corporation PR, despite the overwhelming majority of those in the know agreeing about climate change, many of the public – perhaps even a majority – think it's a con. The sea is become too acidic, our soil denuded of vital nutrients, our world in all senses becoming all used up and wrecked. Also we're running out of clean water. The thing that tells you all you need to know is that when the North Pole melts due to climate change, instead of that being the alarm bell getting us to stop, business wants to dig it up for oil. Big business will only worry about things when it impacts on profits: the movers and shakers are so ideologically blinkered that they would rather the whole thing came down than they surrendered their power or changed courses – if they think about it at all. Probably too busy enjoying the fruits of enormous wealth.

So let's stop for a moment and reflect (not popular I know). If you are really worried about your legacy to your children, a bit less tax here or there is tangible and looks nice but you are being sold a pup. With the magnitude of the storm coming their way, it is going to be of slight comfort. If however you reject this entire social structure – if you look to a socialist alternative – you might be bequeathing something of real value to your children and future generations.

HOWARD PILOTT



Above: Some of the baby boomer generation of the 1960s who weren't so lucky. Right: The Dark Ages are back! Enter Mrs Thatcher...

creation of a large sub-working class. More importantly perhaps was the PR-isation of everything: selling the message that great wealth was nothing to be ashamed of, and poverty was to be sneered at – recall Lord Young: the homeless were something you trod on when you came out of the opera? A return to the Victorian values you can read about in *Jayne Eyre* and *Hard Times*.

And just when we thought it couldn't get any worse, the fall of the USSR. Don't get me wrong, I was not a fan: Leninism is a blind alley, as elites breed elites. However, it was an alternative of sorts. When it was deservedly placed on the ash heap of history we get Fukuyama and the End of History; the triumph of capitalism... and then all restraint went. Hello debt-fuelled consumer-



in; I felt a kinship with most people I knew. Somehow that seems to have gone. People now seem to come together despite rather than because

1945 - 2015

Labour Government wasn't (and still isn't) the way to socialism

July, seventy years ago, saw the election of the first majority Labour government in Britain. Here's what we said at the time in the Preface to our pamphlet *Is Labour Government the Way to Socialism* published in January 1946. We also republish a leaflet produced in Belfast, summarising what that government did to the workers.

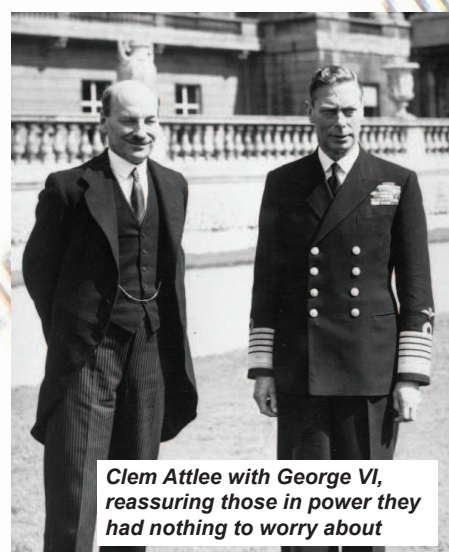
The end of the Second World War saw the election of a Labour Government in Great Britain. There have been other Labour Governments, in 1924 and 1929-31, but this time the Labour Government was returned with an overwhelming majority of M. P.'s in the House of Commons. On the earlier occasions the Labour M. P.'s were in a minority and the Labour Government was consequently dependent for its continued tenure of office on the support of the Liberal Party. For this reason supporters of the Labour Government pleaded that Labour Party policy had not had a fair trial; it had always to be modified to please the Liberals. Consequently when things went wrong, the failure of the Labour Governments was excused on the ground that they were

'in office but not in power.'

This time no such excuse can be pleaded. As a Labour M. P., Mr. Garry Allighan pointed out in an article in the Daily Mail (31st July, 1945), 'This time there can be no alibis.' 'Labour has no alibi left,' he wrote, 'If it fails to produce the goods – full employment, all-round national prosperity, international concord, health, homes and happiness for the whole people – it can fall back on no excuse.'

The Socialist Party of Great Britain does not support the Labour Party or Labour Governments. The S.P.G.B. was founded in 1904 by working men and women who were convinced that Socialism is the only hope of the working class. Labour Governments cannot solve the workers' problems.

In 1924 and again in 1929 we placed on record in our official organ, the *Socialist Standard*, our certainty that the Labour Government just entering office was bound to fail, not because it was a minority government but because the whole idea of Labour Government is based on a wrong principle. We saw those two governments come to an inglorious end, as we knew they must, but the lesson was not taken to heart by the workers. This time there can be no good



Clem Attlee with George VI, reassuring those in power they had nothing to worry about

reason for failing to draw the correct conclusion. The Labour Government which entered office in 1945 cannot solve the problems facing the workers of this country. No matter how able and sincere the M. P.'s and members of the Labour Party may be they cannot succeed in making the existing social system work in the interest of the great majority of the population, the wage and salary earners.

To say this is not, however, a gospel of despair. The workers' problems can be solved, but only by abolishing the capitalist system of society at one sweep and establishing Socialism in its place.

This great task can be brought to fulfilment, but first it is necessary to understand why "Labourism" is not and cannot be the means of doing it.

It is the purpose of this pamphlet to explain why 'Labourism' must fail and why Socialism will succeed. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, S.P.G.B. January, 1946

LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE WORKERS

Your Labour candidate will advise you that you can improve your conditions of life by voting Labour. His Party, the Northern Ireland Labour Party, are at one with the British Labour Party. Below we give some details of Labour Government in Britain:

- (1) Used CONSCRIPT TROOPS to BREAK strikes.
- (2) Imposed a "PAY PAUSE" and "INDUSTRIAL CONSCRIPTION."
- (3) Used (in peace time) a wartime Order, 1305, in an effort to have striking trade unionists JAILED.
- (4) Had workers RESISTING BLACK-LEG LABOUR sentenced to IMPRISONMENT and FINES under old PROPERTY-PROTECTION ACTS of 1875.
- (5) Agreed to, and tried to justify, the dropping of the FIRST A-Bomb on Hiroshima.
- (6) Safeguarded the interests of British capitalism by nationalisation of bankrupt industries.
- (7) Sent British troops to AID DUTCH IMPERIALISM, and IMPRISONED and BANISHED African leaders.
- (8) Imposed the FIRST CHARGES on the "free" Health Services.

This is but a small part of Labour's black record when it waged war against the workers in the interests of British capitalism between the years 1945 and 1951. We challenge our Labour opponents to deny or "explain" these terrible happenings.

In this Election the UNIONIST AND LABOUR candidates stand for the MAINTENANCE of CAPITALISM. Only the WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY challenges the capitalist system and proposes an alternative—SOCIALISM.

**BEFORE VOTING YOU HAVE A DUTY TO CONSIDER THE
SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE.**

Printed by the Cranmure Press, 49a Mountjoy Street, Belfast 13, and Published by the World Socialist Party, 186 Donegall Street, Belfast 1.

1960 SPGB leaflet (in brief):

Between 1945 and 1951 Labour

- used conscript troops to break strikes
- imposed pay restraints
- tried to use out-of-date laws to have trade unionists jailed
- did the same in order to jail strikers
- supported the Hiroshima bomb
- bailed out bankrupt industries by nationalising them
- brought in the first NHS charges
- jailed African independence leaders

The Underwhelming Theory of Underconsumption

Reformists are calling on workers to fight against 'austerity' (not capitalism), based on the flimsy old theory of underconsumption.

An economic theory can—and very often does—live on even after it has been debunked. Over a century and a half ago Marx exposed the fallacies underlying the theory of underconsumption, but the brains of living Leftists—as in a zombie film run backwards—continue to feed off that 'undead' theory. The most recent example of the doctrine's continued influence can be seen in the views of the 'anti-austerity movement' on how to overcome the current economic crisis.

The theory of underconsumption posits that a root cause of crisis is the inability of workers to 'buy back' what they have produced. The spending power of workers, as represented in their wages, is far below the value of the commodities created.

So an obvious remedy, from this perspective, would be to boost consumer demand through government spending and wage increases. This would bring consumption and production back into a sort of equilibrium. Conversely, austerity policies are doomed to fail because they put downward pressure on consumer demand at the very moment it needs to be stimulated.

This viewpoint seems almost commonsensical. During a crisis, we can see examples of unsold commodities. And workers are well aware of their own limited spending power. The theory also appeals to anyone disgusted by the sight of the rich telling us to tighten our belts as they continue to live in luxury. No wonder that the

theory of underconsumption is so compelling.

So what's the problem with it?

That there is a problem with the theory might occur to anyone who considers why capitalists would not eagerly embrace a simple remedy for crisis that would have the added benefit of easing workers' discontent. Are capitalists too greedy? Or just stupid?

All hail the consumer

As commodity sellers, capitalists obviously appreciate the merits of increased consumer spending. Producers of everyday consumer goods, in particular, would be able to sell more commodities if workers had higher wages. Any capitalist firm, in fact, would welcome wage increases that result in greater sales of its own commodities.

But the wages that a capitalist would like to see rise are those paid by other capitalists. Marx explains that capitalist

"No capitalist is eager to raise workers' wages to benefit other capitalists"

would of course 'like the workers of *other* capitalists to be the greatest possible consumers of *his own* commodity' (*Grundrisse*). Higher wages for *those* workers is all fine and good. But no capitalist is eager to raise workers' wages to benefit other capitalists. Whenever wages are raised it usually is the result of pressure from workers or the labour market.

The hypocrisy of capitalists only wanting higher wages for workers other than their own probably does not even cross their minds because

those other workers
are grouped
under

the reassuring mental category of "consumer". Apart from the capitalist's own workers, Marx explains, 'the whole remaining working class confronts him as *consumer* and *participant in exchange*, as money-spender, not as worker'.

Reformists might be encouraged when capitalists express approval for boosting consumer spending, spotting potential allies in their anti-austerity crusade. But capitalists are simply daydreaming about having more customers for their products, not fretting about the state of the working class.

The contrast between the capitalists' deep and abiding love for the consumer, and their attitude toward their own workers, is stark. There is no room for illusions when it comes to the production process they oversee. 'Every capitalist knows this about his worker,' Marx wrote, 'that he does not relate to him as producer to consumer and [he therefore] wishes to restrict his consumption, i.e. his

ability to exchange, his wage, as much as possible'.

In the end, that attitude of capitalists toward their own workers is decisive—because capitalists are not in a position to influence the wages of other workers, whereas they are quite capable of limiting the consumption of their own workers.

For this reason alone, the 'simple remedy' peddled by advocates of the underconsumption theory is going to remain on the shelf like an unsold commodity.

The premise of profit

The basic reason capitalists aren't going to buy the wage-raise remedy is that capitalism itself is premised, in an important sense, on workers' 'underconsumption'. That is, profit depends on the value of

Won't
stay
dead



wages paid to workers being *less* than the value of the labour workers expend in production. If workers were paid enough to 'buy back' all the commodities they produced, the source of profit would dry up.

That doesn't mean that capitalists are incapable of paying workers a 'fair wage'. All that the term really means, when used in a precise way, is that workers have been paid a wage more or less equivalent to the value of their

'labour-power', a term Marx defined as the mental or physical capabilities that a worker possesses.

The value of labour-power, as in the case of commodities in general, is determined by the labour-time necessary to produce it. More specifically, labour-power's value is determined by the value of the commodities (or 'means of subsistence') consumed by the worker to reproduce the capacity to work: such as food, clothing, and housing, as well as more intangible things like education.

"Underconsumption is hardwired to the capitalist system"

But the value of a workers' labour-power and the actual labour the worker expends in the production process are two *separate* quantities (comparable when reduced to 'socially necessary labour time'). Profit stems from the value of the labour expended in production being greater than the value of the worker's labour-power. This exploitation of the worker's labour is concealed by the

wage form, where workers are paid 'fairly' (sometimes, at least) according to the value of their labour-power.

This brief excursion into Marx's theory of surplus-value was necessary to refute the basic assumptions of the theory of underconsumption. Understanding

"If workers were paid enough to 'buy back' all the commodities they produced, the source of profit would dry up"

the source of profit reveals that 'underconsumption' is hardwired to the capitalist system. Capitalism is a system of production for profit, and profit is only possible through the extraction of what is essentially 'unpaid labour'. If this relative underconsumption is a problem, the only solution is to do away with capitalism.

Consumer demand is important in capitalism, certainly, but profit is the system's lifeblood. No commodity—however useful to society—will be produced unless that production is a potential means to profit. An increase in wages is tolerated up to a point—but there is a limit beyond which capitalism will not go because relative underconsumption is integral to the profit system.

A cure for crises that would effectively drain the system of profit would be as useful to capitalism as the ancient practice of bloodletting was once to the sick.

Useful idiocy

Capitalists are not going to introduce policies concocted on the basis of the theory of underconsumption. But the theory is still useful to them ideologically.

In presenting underconsumption as a cause of crisis, rather than a precondition for profit, reformists suggest to workers that capitalism can be improved to the point where the system adequately meets

their needs. They also blur the reality of class conflict by saying that capitalists, too, would benefit from the increased demand that wage raises would bring.

Capitalists shouldn't mind too much that they are ridiculed by reformists for resisting this simple solution. Far better for workers to imagine that their problems stem from a few boneheaded billionaires, than from a profit system that can *never* meet their needs. The irony, of course, is that the reformists themselves are the system's useful idiots.

Reformist ideologues

also can be trusted to misinterpret the criticism that socialists make of their theory of underconsumption. If a socialist points out the real limits under capitalism to expanding workers' consumption, as we have here, it sounds 'defeatist' to their ears—or even like an argument in favour

of austerity.

So let's make the following point quite clear: Socialists recognize the importance for workers to continually struggle for better wages and working conditions. As wagedworkers, we know only too well how capitalists are exerting the utmost pressure in the opposite direction. To abstain from that struggle—the class struggle that continues and will continue as long as capitalism exists—would be suicidal.

But socialists aspire to more than just winning the fairest possible wage under an unfair system. We think that workers should not only resist the efforts by capitalists to drive down our standard of living but also organize ourselves politically to end capitalism. The reformists dismiss this standpoint as 'unrealistic'.

But they are the ones who have lost touch with reality. They ignore the limits of capitalism. The basic problem with their standpoint is not that they call for higher wages or reject austerity, but that they pursue those aims while treating capitalism as if it were just a mechanism for producing social wealth, rather than a system powered by profit. They spread illusions about the nature of capitalism in offering the enticing idea that there's a 'win-win' solution out there for workers and capitalists alike—a simple way to expand consumption while surmounting crisis.

The theory falls flat—squashed by the reality of capitalism. And the sooner workers recognize just how thin and lifeless this theory is, the better for the socialist movement.

MICHAEL SCHAUERTE



Socialist Party Head Office
Sunday 5 July 2015, 3.00pm
'The Failure of Capitalist Production: Political Implications of the Great Recession'
Guest Speaker: Andrew Kliman
52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN



Identity **Individual and Collective**

Just occasionally the entertainment media gives us a glimpse of the social realities that it tries, so desperately, to obscure. One such unlikely instance of this was a show devised by the illusionist Derren Brown. In it he had a group of about a dozen people from three different cities (London, New York and Amsterdam – if I recall correctly) place their hand on a sheet of paper and draw around it adding their signatures in the centre of the outline. He then took the papers away and promised that on his return he would deliver to each person an in-depth account of their psychological characteristics. An hour or so later he returned and delivered his written analysis to each person of the group. Almost without exception the individuals of the group were astonished (and some rather embarrassed) by the insights into what they believed to be the most intimate elements of their character. The climax of the performance came as a result of Brown's request that they exchange papers between themselves and the subsequent realization that what was written on them was identical.

What is surprising to socialists was the astonishment people exhibit when confronted with evidence of just how much we share in terms of our hopes and needs. It is what unites us, we maintain, rather than what divides us that defines humanity. I say we are surprised but perhaps this is rather disingenuous to the results of our analysis of capitalism and, in particular, the understanding of the ideology that sustains it. The cult of 'individualism' is, of course, one of the cornerstones of bourgeois ideology

– but just how have they managed to convince us that 'there's no such thing as society' but only individuals. It is an obvious political advantage to keep one's opponents from acting collectively (which, ironically, the ruling class rarely fail to do) but even those who may well oppose the politics of the ruling elite demur from entering into any collective political identity. What exactly is it in our culture that makes the statement 'society is made up of individuals' acceptable but the equally logical contention that 'individuals are made up by society' an anathema?

Socially produced

Most of us would admit that the food we eat, the clothes we wear and the technology we use are all socially produced – why then is there a reluctance to acknowledge that the ideas we have and even the very language we use to express them are also social products? Indeed without this socialised aspect of our culture we could not verbally communicate and would have no ideas.

In what dialecticians call the theory of internal relations we learn, amongst many other lessons, that to understand the individual we have to conceive the whole and vice-versa. Without a concept of the wood (forest) we would only see a collection of trees and have no knowledge of how the ecosystem defines the individual tree. Our culture insists on a discrete analysis (the perspective of the one viewing 'the other') in almost all of its understanding of everything. To continue the forest metaphor we would be at a loss to explain the tiger's behaviour and appearance

without reference to its habitat. In the same way any concept of the human individual is dependent on the idea of 'society'.

So we can be as bold as to say that all of our ideas (abstracts) are dependent on our cultural and historical context and that some of these are more politically obvious than others. The pressures and ideology of capitalism make the cult of the individual an obvious choice for most people trying to understand who and what they are. Although we produce everything socially the access to what we have created is only as an individual consumer. It is this alienating factor within commodity production that reinforces the prison cell of the egotistical self that is essential to the political construct of the 'individual'. A friend once stated that only an event that directly concerned him as an individual could give him a feeling of 'reality' in contrast to any political activity. In other words the factors that brought about the event were of little interest to him (the political context) because of the lack (until it became personal) of any egotistical content.

Many have said to me down the years that 'they cannot wait for the revolution', and said this in defence of innumerable reformist activities, but this again only indicates the self-indulgence of the ego. What has just been said does not indicate a rejection of 'individuality'; it is a rejection of the liberal ideological concept of individualism which we conceive of as one of the most destructive political ideas masquerading as humanism. The great irony is that without a collective (class) identity the majority can never liberate themselves from their egotistical prisons and experience true individuality.

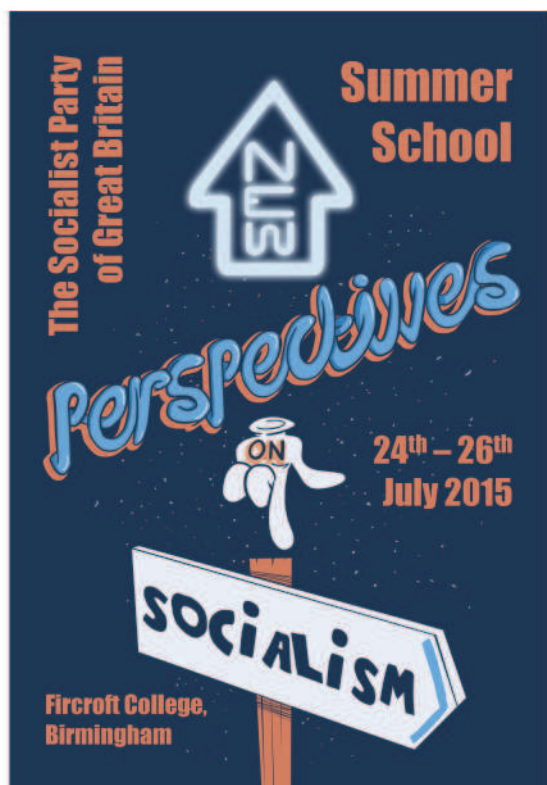
Collective political action

It may seem paradoxical that it is only through the collective political action of the majority that the true nature of the individual can be liberated. Socialists are often criticised as 'obsessed with class' but it is only through class consciousness that we can destroy what

makes it so necessary; any denial of the importance of social class invariably indicates the desire to sustain its divisions. Only within a community defined by social justice and political equality can one truly acquire the love and respect of those whom we love and respect, not through what we have (consumerism) but by what we do (produce). The talents that a child may possess can only flourish if they are not handicapped by the class context into which they're born. It is truly heartbreaking to know that so much human potential will wither and die because of the poverty (both material and cultural) defines their lives.

The talents involved in producing something of value for your community is where the true expression of one's individuality resides and this, of course, is the antithesis of everything capitalism is or ever can be. It might be argued that 'creative work' does exist within the present system but the few who do enjoy this luxury inevitably suffer the alienation inherent in the commodification of their product in terms of repeating the initial commercial success (musicians and other artists who have enjoyed this kind of success often have difficulty in maintaining it because of the corrosive effect sales pressure has on creativity). The only reason to 'produce for profit' is to sustain the lives of luxury of the parasite class who own everything but contribute nothing. If you really wish to discover your potential as an individual then first you will have to help us destroy the class system that makes the fulfilment of such a need impossible at the moment. Merely expressing yourself as a consumer impoverishes the individual spirit and condemns liberal sensibilities to political impotence. Authentic individuality is meaningless without a concept of the social and it can only fulfil its meaning through a revolutionary change in society because in its present incarnation it is merely egotism.

WEZ



The principles of revolutionary socialism were formed over a hundred years ago. Then, capitalist growth was being fuelled by the technological and logistical developments following the Industrial Revolution. Since then, the history of capitalism has been marked by economic peaks and troughs, two World Wars, the rise and fall of state capitalism, massive advances in science, and widespread shifts in culture and beliefs. The Socialist Party of Great Britain argues that its original principles are still valid despite all these changes. This is because the basic structure of capitalism persists, regardless of differences in the way it is organised.

But is this right? Has society changed so much that class structure and the role of the state are significantly different now compared to previous centuries? What effects have these changes had on class consciousness and the likelihood of revolution? And how should revolutionary socialists respond through their theory and activity?

It's always healthy to re-examine our beliefs, to see if they still apply to our ever-changing world. This weekend of talks and discussion will be an opportunity to take a fresh look at several important aspects of the socialist viewpoint.

Full residential cost (including accommodation and meals Friday evening to Sunday afternoon) is £80. The concessionary rate is £40. Day visitors are welcome, but please book in advance.

To book a place, send a cheque (payable to the Socialist Party of Great Britain) to Summer School, Sutton Farm, Aldborough, Boroughbridge, York, YO51 9ER, or book online through the QR code or at <http://spgb.net/summerschool2015>. E-mail enquiries to spgbschool@yahoo.co.uk

Punishing the Poorest

It is a common feature of capitalism that those at or near the bottom of the social pyramid are attacked in specific ways by the state and its agencies. In many cases these are the people who are easiest to scapegoat and who find it hardest to resist. And such attacks often happen when capitalism is in some kind of crisis. Here we look at some historical and current examples.

Since the early seventeenth century there had been some state provision, including workhouses, for looking after the poor. Under the Speenhamland system, low wages were in effect subsidised out of the poor rate. The New Poor Law of 1834 was intended to reduce the expenditure on the relief of the poorest, which had increased enormously after the spread of enclosures and the growth in the number of the destitute. It required all recipients of 'relief' to enter the workhouse, which was deliberately made an extremely unappealing place to live. Families were separated, food was basic, and able-bodied men had to perform hard physical labour. Thomas Carlyle said the message was in effect that 'whosoever will not work ought not to live'. The dread of the workhouse, in periods of unemployment, illness or old age, was for many years pervasive among working people. Workhouses were officially abolished only in 1930, on grounds of their expense.

The Depression of the early 1930s, with its drastic rise in joblessness and the consequent increased expense of unemployment pay-outs, saw massive attacks on the living standards of unemployed workers. Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald was explicit that unemployment benefit was not, and was not intended to be, a living wage, so the government had no compunction in cutting it. In November 1931 the benefit rate for an adult man was cut from the pre-decimal equivalent of 85p to 76p a week, for instance, and married women were generally excluded from

example, one-third of the unemployed had their benefits stopped completely. Some local bodies did try to alleviate the worst effects of the cuts, though. It was not just the financial impact of the means test that workers objected to, but also the intrusive and insensitive investigation into their family situation and finances.

The recent recession and consequent austerity measures have led to similar onslaughts on many of the poorest. One clear example is the notorious 'bedroom tax', as opponents have named what is officially called the under-occupancy penalty. People have their housing benefit cut if they are deemed to have 'too many' bedrooms. It has saved the government some money but, because of the lack of availability of one-bedroom flats in social housing, has largely failed to free up 'under-occupied' properties. Many of those penalised in this way are disabled, and in general this vindictive piece of legislation leads to poor health: people are forced to eat less in order to save money, and stress is caused by struggling to meet bills or having to move. One tenant had, after essentials, just £6 a week for food and travel; he then lost £15 a week because of the bedroom tax (*Guardian online*, 16 March).

More generally, reducing the amount paid out in benefits is a government priority, often coupled with offloading this dirty work to companies who make a profit from it. Atos, for instance, went to great lengths to cut the numbers on disability benefit by declaring people fit for work,



unemployment benefit if they had not worked a specific number of weeks after getting married, no matter how long they had worked before marriage. These cuts were only reversed in 1934.

But above all it was the means test that constituted a vicious attack on the living standards of the unemployed. Under this people could have their benefits reduced or withheld if they had some savings or their household had some other income. So someone could find their benefits cut if they had a son who was employed, or if their mother lived with them and drew a war widow's pension. The impact of all this varied from place to place: in Lancashire, for



even in some cases if they were severely paralysed. Even when some of the more absurd rulings were overturned on appeal, claimants had by then gone through longish periods of stress and destitution. In one case, a man who was half-blind and partially paralysed after a stroke died the day after being found fit for work and told that his benefits would be stopped (Owen Jones: *The Establishment*). There are plenty of other horror stories along such lines.

A4e is a company that treats job-seekers as just another means for their own profit, sending them on useless 'courses' and offering no real assistance in finding work at all. The Mandatory Work Activity programme forces the

unemployed into unpaid work, and does not improve their chances of getting a 'proper' job. Just turning up late can lead to losing benefit and having to resort to foodbanks. All this is very similar to the workfare system introduced in the US in 1996, which forced people to work unpaid in return for benefits. Unpaid work undermines the wages and job security of existing staff, while of course increasing the profits of the companies concerned.

The prison population in Britain has almost doubled since 1993, and it is the poorest who are subject to the worst police harassment and the threat of jail. These developments



though, have been even worse in the US. Earlier this year the Washington-based think-tank the Institute for Policy Studies published a report *The Poor Get Prison*, which looks at the ways poverty has been effectively criminalised there.

Debtors' prisons were officially abolished in the US in 1833, but a very similar procedure still exists. For instance, people are often fined for low-level offences such as traffic violations; but if they cannot pay the whole of the fine, they may be imprisoned. If you are arrested but not convicted, you may have to pay to have your arrest record cleared when you apply for a new job. If you are put on probation, you may – depending on which state you live in – be charged for services provided by a private probation company (such as \$12 a day for an alcohol-monitoring device); and if you can't pay, you face prison. An estimated 600,000 people in the US are homeless on any given night, and they can be arrested for crimes such as public sleeping or begging. It is the poorest section of the population who are punished by fines or imprisonment for trivial misdemeanours, while those who are rather better-off get away with it.

From the Poor Law to the means test to the bedroom tax, capitalism has saved some of its most savage onslaughts for the most vulnerable, those who are hardly in a position to produce profits and so are little more than a drain on resources.

PAUL BENNETT



Capital needs labour

THE TORIES, Labour and UKIP all say that immigration is a 'problem'. As this is repeated by the media most people seem to think so too. But it is not immigration that is the problem. It's xenophobia that sees it as one. Even from a capitalist perspective – let alone the socialist one which sees all workers as part of a worldwide class with a common interest – immigration is a good thing. This is well explained in the chapter on the subject in *It's the Economy, Stupid: Economics for Voters* by Vicky Pryce, Andy Ross and Peter Unwin.

If workers are migrating to a country that means there are job opportunities there. In other words, that the capitalist economy is expanding there. As the authors point out:

'... if an area of the economy is expanding it will tend to have increased job vacancies and higher wages. Most fluctuations in migration levels are economic, and so such an area will tend to attract more immigrants and more incumbent labour'.

If they were logical – or rather, if they weren't vote-catching politicians – Cameron and Osborne ought to be celebrating the figures showing increased immigration as a sign that the British economy is recovering from the slump. But they don't, at least not in public.

Most migrants find jobs in the private sector, where employers only take on workers if there's something in it for them – profit. The authors express this in this way (they are orthodox economists):

'... immigrants are only employed in the private sector if they produce more than they are paid, so this 'surplus' productivity flows back into the rest of the economy'.

In other words, immigrant workers like local workers produce more than their keep, even if this surplus is pocketed in the first instance by their employers who hand over a part to the state as taxes before being able to re-invest any in expanding production with a view to profit.

One person who has openly recognised the link between immigration and an expanding economy is Tony Blair, but he's no longer a serving politician who needs to think of votes. In the run-up to May's election he undermined Miliband's bid to garner anti-immigrant votes by saying, in the words of a headline in the *Times* (16 March), 'I was right to let in eastern Europeans':

'The former prime minister rejected those, like Ed Miliband, who claim that the party was wrong to open the doors to workers from new EU members in 2004 rather than adopting temporary controls. He argued that, at the time of the decision, the UK economy was "booming" and needed "skilled workers from abroad".'

Under capitalism labour, or more accurately labour-power (ability to work), is a commodity. Since new wealth, including more profits, can only be created by the application of this commodity a ready supply is essential to capitalism and its imperative to accumulate more and more capital. Before Britain joined the EU in 1974, while Germany, France and the Benelux countries got their extra labour from Italy and France's colonies in North Africa, Britain got its from Ireland, the West Indies, India, Pakistan and other parts of its old Empire. After 1974 Britain's source of extra labour shifted to Europe and, from 2004 when they joined the EU, to the countries of eastern Europe.

Even if British capitalism withdraws from the EU it will still need an outside source of extra labour. In any event, we will risk a prediction: Cameron won't be able to cut back the movement of the commodity labour-power to Britain to the levels he has pledged, at least not unless he is prepared to hold back the accumulation of capital in Britain.



Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be, the comedy play with music by Frank Norman and Lionel Bart was revived in 2014 at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East in London, directed by Terry Johnson. The original 1959 production by Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop was described by Littlewood as '*Guys and Dolls* but with its flies undone.' The music and lyrics were written by Lionel Bart, a gay Jewish East End boy, or in his own words 'a working-class homosexual Jewish junkie commie.'

Fings depicts a world of the 'lumpen proletariat' of gamblers, pimps, prostitutes, razor gangs, and crooks in a struggling 'schpieler' (a mix of gambling joint and knocking shop) in a 1950s Soho reminiscent of Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*. The play is performed in cockney rhyming slang, thieves cant, and Polari, the slang in gay subculture until the late 1960s. Paul Baker in *Polari: The Lost Language of Gay Men* writes 'Polari flourished in the repressive 1950s, where the regulation of post-war sexual morality was viewed as a priority, and prosecutions against gay men reached record levels.' The play includes a song *Contemperry* (sic) sung by Horace, a gay interior designer while the title song includes the line 'poofs in coffee 'ouses'

In the 1950s the police's image was projected by BBC TV's cosy *Dixon of Dock Green*, and it was not until 1963 that police corruption became public knowledge when Detective Sergeant Harold Challenor was charged with corruption offences at the Old Bailey: 'Soho sounded like Chicago when Challenor described it, he believed that fighting crime in Soho was like trying to swim against a tide of sewage' (James Morton *Bent Coppers*).

In *Fings* the 'schpieler' is handed over to the bent copper. Before the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act it was 'fahsends of pounds passing across the baize' but the Act legalised gambling in the UK, betting shops opened, and the government hoped to take gambling off the streets and end the practice of bookmakers sending 'runners' to collect from punters. The Act 'knocked their street-based competitors out of business at a stroke, a lot of them found that the capital required to set up premises, pay staff and 'go straight' was beyond them' (*The Independent* 5 April 2008).

In the 1950s there was concern about the visibility of prostitutes in London, and the Wolfenden Committee recommended a crackdown on street prostitution, and these were put into effect in the 1959 Street Offences

Act: 'It shall be an offence for a common prostitute to loiter or solicit in a street or public place for the purpose of prostitution.' The song *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be* is Bart's satirical ode to the good old days of unchecked prostitution: 'I used to lead a lovely life of sin, dough! I charged a ton, now it's become an undercover game... there used to be class doing the town, buying a bit of vice, and that's when a brass couldn't go down under the union price... I've got news for Wolfenden, Fings Ain't



Wot They Used T'Be.' The Act forced the majority of prostitutes off the street. In *Fings* the prostitutes are skint. Helen J Self in *History Repeating Itself: The Regulation of Prostitution and*

Trafficking writes 'the essence of the scheme was not to abolish prostitution, but to push women off the streets... off-street outlets for prostitution multiplied ... other unwelcome side-effects was an increase in kerb-crawling.'

The *Socialist Standard* of October 1957 wrote 'the Committee's aim is simply to brush the dirt under the carpet' and 'the real causes of prostitution are the economic and social conditions in which it lives and flourishes. It is, in fact, a product of the monogamous marriage system within the framework of buying-and-selling societies' which reflects Marx and Engels view that 'the bourgeois family finds its complement in public prostitution' (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*). Lenin in an interview with Clara Zetkin argued that prostitutes are 'victims of bourgeois society, accursed by two concepts; firstly of its accursed system of property and secondly of its accursed moral hypocrisy' (*The Women's Question*).

The English Collective of Prostitutes established in 1975 seeks the decriminalisation of prostitution which is supported by trade unions such as the CWU and GMB, but 'sex work' has divided the trade union movement. In 2009 the TUC Women's Congress voted against the decriminalisation of the sex industry and the unionisation of sex workers. The 2009 Policing and Crime Act, by targeting brothels for raids drove prostitution further underground, increasing the vulnerability of sex workers, and preventing women from reporting violence.

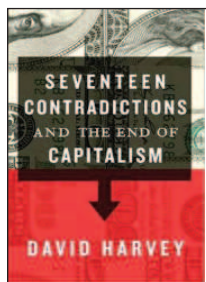
Fings concerns Rosie, an innocent young woman on the run from a violent partner, who goes on the game. Bart's *Where Do the Little Birds Go*, and *The Ceiling's Coming Dahn* are 'two of the best songs written for women in post-war English musical theatre' and makes Bart 'the uncrowned King of composing the English Whore's lament: give him a brass, and he'll expose the pain and doubt and fear and love in her' (*The London Bluebird*, 30 August 2012).

Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be is vibrant working-class theatre devoid of bourgeois moralising.

STEVE CLAYTON

Seventeen and Counting

David Harvey: *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism*. Profile £9.99.



We'll not state all the proposed contradictions here, just list the three kinds that David Harvey identifies. Foundational contradictions (such as those

between use value and exchange value, and private appropriation and common wealth) are at the very heart of capitalism, essential aspects of it. Moving contradictions are continually changing (for instance, between competition and monopoly, and inequalities of wealth and income) and dangerous ones threaten capitalism's existence. This last category includes the relation to the natural world and, because of the ubiquity of alienation, to human nature: capitalism will simply become unacceptable to the majority of the population.

Along the way some interesting points are made. One is that, despite the supposed emphasis on competition, monopoly is in fact central to capitalism, since the capitalist class exercise a collective monopoly over the means of production. Yet potentially monopolisable skills, such as computer programming, are countered by increased avenues to acquire them, thus undermining the chances of relatively high wages for workers who possess these skills.

Other claims are less convincing, though. There are frequent references to the existence of a class of rentiers, who own the land, mineral rights, and so on. However, it is not clear whether these are claimed to constitute a separate class of owners, or just a sectional interest within the capitalist class. The landlord class are described as unproductive, in contrast to 'productive capital'.

But it is particularly in regard to what he means by the end of capitalism that Harvey is unclear and inconsistent. There is an early reference to 'the utopian aim of a social order without exchange value and therefore moneyless', but this is quickly dropped, apparently in favour of Silvio Gesell's bizarre idea of money that goes out of date and so cannot be accumulated as happens now. Harvey also advocates what he

calls 'revolutionary reform', which involves reducing the inequalities of wealth and income to the extent that the reproduction of capital is threatened. But he hardly makes any case for this, and capitalism can after all operate with far less inequality than currently exists.

The final chapter lists seventeen 'ideas for political praxis', one for each contradiction. These are something of a hotch-potch, though: abolish all inequalities except those implied in 'to each according to their need', and introduce equal entitlements to health care, housing, food security and some others. In place of the class division of capitalism there would be associated producers freely deciding what to produce and how. Yet there would still be some means of exchange (Gesell-style money, perhaps, but why?). Maybe the proposals here are not intended to form a consistent whole, but they do not equate to socialism. After all, it would be easy enough to advocate a moneyless society without exchange if the author shared our conception of future society.

PB

Blacklisted

***Blacklisted: The Secret War Between Big Business and Union Activists*. By Dave Smith and Phil Chamberlain. New Internationalist Publications Ltd, 2015, £9.99.**



This is about the industrial, mostly building construction, struggles between workers and the bosses, and their use of spies to inform on union representatives, thus resulting

in their victimisation and unemployment.

It is a story of bitter class conflicts in which the employers were, and are, supported by the police special branches and MI5. Hundreds of building workers, and others, have been blacklisted just for highlighting dangerous conditions on building sites.

Some of the worst companies, listed by the authors, victimising union members, all in the interest of maximising profits, include the Kier Group, Balfour Beatty, Tarmac, Taylor Woodrow and probably the most notorious of them all, Sir Robert McAlpine, largely responsible

for using, and encouraging, such spy outfits as the former Economic League and The Consulting Association (TCA).

The strength of this book lies in exposing the largely secret war of the bosses; the weakness, however, is the demand by the authors for a public enquiry. And all the TUC demands is that the employers compensate the blacklisted and victimised workers under the rubric | : 'Own Up! Clean Up! Pay Up!'.

Nowhere is it suggested that the workers should abolish the system of wage slavery, and the profit motive altogether, which gave rise and gives rise to the blacklisting and victimising in the first place. More's the pity.

PEN

Inequality – high and rising

***Inequality and the 1%*. Danny Dorling. Verso. 2014.**



Dorling is a social geographer, some of whose books have been reviewed in these pages previously. This is his latest work, focused on examining inequality, mainly in Britain but

with reference to other comparable countries too. In particular, Dorling looks at trends in wealth and related phenomena, focusing on the position in society of the top 1 per cent, who have got richer and richer in recent decades.

He examines statistical data and trends on inequality with regard to categories such as childhood, work, wealth and health, and much of what he uncovers is unlikely to come as much of a surprise to readers of this magazine. Some of the statistics bear repeating all the same:

- After tax, the proportion of UK income received by the top 1 per cent each year is now around 24 percent;
- The top 1 percent own 53 percent of the personally tradable wealth;
- The richest 1 percent in the UK now have wealth that is equivalent to the bottom 30 per cent put together with everything they own, and this effect is worsening;
- The national minimum wage would be £18.83 if it had kept pace with rises in FTSE100 Chief Executive 'salaries' (as opposed to £6.19 when this was written);
- While most people have had

real pay cuts since the onset of the financial crisis, the accumulated wealth of the richest has grown in recent years by around 11 percent per annum.

Dorling makes many of the same arguments as Oliver James in *Affluenza* and Pickett and Wilkinson in *The Spirit Level*, namely that more equal societies tend to be happier and healthier on a range of measures, and that countries like the UK and US are heading for ever greater disasters because of it.

For all the positives to this book – and there are many – Dorling, like these other writers, has a tendency to assume that the right sort of governments and attendant economic and social policies can make a massive difference. But at best they can only tinker around at the margins, and since the real globalization of capital in recent decades, their ability to do even this has all but disappeared. He calls the type of tax and banking reform that he alludes to as a ‘slow revolution’ that is needed, but also concedes towards the end of the book ‘it may be that a slow revolution is not enough’. We would suggest that the history of the last two centuries of capitalism illustrates this point precisely.

In essence, the rich do not get rich because of historical accidents that some governments fail to act upon and reverse – they get richer because accumulating and reinvesting capital is the lifeblood of the market system and when the flow gets clotted (like

in the 1970s) the people who really own and control society will act to remove that clot, so that capital can flow freely again. This has happened across the world, and is presently in the process of happening in countries like Greece. Capital normally flows to where profit rates are most lucrative – this is the economic logic of the system. And capital accumulates from the exploitation of the rest of us – and it does so primarily to the owners of capital.

The reason we live in an unequal society dominated by the richest 1 percent is because while we have socially co-ordinated production and distribution carried on by billions of people across the planet, creating and doing all the things we need to survive, the wealth they produce (and the wealth invested to produce it) is owned by this tiny minority. And this minority has a supreme economic incentive to keep things running that way, ie in their direction, which is the natural direction of flow.

This means there is only one way to get rid of inequality in the modern world and that is to abolish its source – the class-divided profit system we call capitalism. Otherwise it would mean more doomed attempts at trying to defy economic gravity – and on that front, we’ve seen more than enough already. In fact, it was repeated failures to humanize capitalism by the social democrats and reformers that has led us to where we are now.

DAP

Dear Editors

Paul Bennett does an excellent job in his article ‘Stressed Out’ explaining just how much pressure workers are under today (Socialist Standard, June 2015).

It’s no surprise that education and health are suffering higher levels of stress, too. Business values have steadily been imported in to areas that in theory are under state-control. It’s now difficult in any work place to escape certain values! Education and health are increasingly business-orientated in many ways.

Researchers like Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson, who wrote ‘The Spirit Level’ book, have also explained how very unequal societies make our physical and mental health worse generally. A divided society creates real problems, including stress and illness.

The best stress-relief is changing ‘the system’!

Yours faithfully,

Graeme Kemp, Wellington, Shropshire



Taken To Taskers

HOW MANY of us get through the working day’s frustrations by dreaming about how better our jobs would be if the boss wasn’t around to make all the decisions?

For the staff at the workplaces

featured in Channel 4’s *Running The Shop*, this wish comes true, for a few weeks while the cameras are on them, anyway.

The show’s format sounds like it was ‘thought showered’ by a focus group mashing up *The Fixer* and *Don’t Tell The Bride* with *The Apprentice*. But apparently it came from ‘inspirational entrepreneur’ Hilary Devey, whose ‘brave solution’ for floundering companies is for the senior managers to take a temporary break and allow the employees to

manage themselves and implement their own ideas. The programme treats this as a ground-breaking notion, as if no-one else has ever thought that workers are capable of running organisations.

The first episode visits Taskers The Home Store, which flogs furniture, appliances and DIY goods to the folk of Aintree. Its mission statement: ‘give people a BMW, charge them for a Ford’. Managing Director John Tasker is very hands-on, and keeps everyone else’s hands off all the important decisions. So while he’s away, the staff enjoy the opportunity to put into practice their new approaches to advertising, and different product ranges. Without being held back by hierarchies, they find more confidence and creativity in working together. Unfortunately, their motivation has to come from wanting to keep Taskers financially viable, and getting their boss’ approval when he returns, rather than doing a good job in and of itself. But squint a bit, and you can see something of what work could be like – people freely discussing ideas and democratically deciding what to do. Hopefully, later episodes will see the staff getting ambitious enough to think about how changing the workplace’s structure would be even more rewarding.



Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our **Meetup** site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 5 July 2015, 3.00pm
 'The Failure of Capitalist Production: Political Implications of the Great Recession'
 Guest Speaker: Andrew Kliman
 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

East Anglia Regional Branch

Saturday 11 July 2015, 12 noon-4.00pm
 Business Meeting
 The Quebec Tavern, 93-97 Quebec Road,
 Norwich NR1 4HY

Kent and Sussex Regional Branch

Saturday 18 July 2015, from 12 noon
 Canterbury literature stall
 The Parade Pedestrian Precinct, Canterbury
 CT1 2JL

Socialist Party

Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 July 2015, from 10.00am
 Literature stall at the Lambeth Country Show
 Brockwell Park, Norwood Road, London SE24 9BJ

Manchester Branch

Saturday 8 July 2015, 2.00pm
 'Whose benefit?'
 Unicorn, Church Street, Manchester M4 1PW

Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 19 July 2015, 3.00pm
 'What Became of Labour's "socialism"?'
 Speaker: Pat Deutz
 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN



Lambeth Discussion Group

Thursday 30 July 2015, 7.00pm
 'Trade Unions: "centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital"'
 Speaker: Steve Clayton
 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

Socialist Party Head Office

Sunday 16 August 2015, 3.00pm
 'Origins of British Socialism: 1884-1904'
 Speaker: Keith Scholey
 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

Kent and Sussex Regional Branch

Saturday 22 August 2015, from 12 noon
 Canterbury literature stall
 The Parade Pedestrian Precinct, Canterbury
 CT1 2JL

Lambeth Discussion Group

Thursday 27 August 2015, 7.00pm
 'Fracking - the metabolic rift with nature'
 Speaker: Steve Clayton
 52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

Other events

Street Stall
 Saturday 18 July from 12 noon
 The Parade pedestrian precinct
 Canterbury CT1 2JL

Brighton Discussion Group
 Tuesday 21 July 7.30pm
 The Brighthelm Centre
 (Activities Hall - Basement)
 North Road, Brighton BN1 1YD

Street Stall
 Saturday 22 August from 12 noon
 The Parade pedestrian precinct
 Canterbury CT1 2JL

The Socialist Party badge



Cheque or postal order (no cash) for £10.00 payable to SPGB SW Regional Branch, c/o Veronica Clanchy, FAO: South West Regional Branch, 42 Winifred Road, Poole, Dorset. BH15 3PU. Any queries, please phone 01202 569826. Please include own phone number or other contact details.

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Declaration of Principles

This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as

a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of

the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

50 Years Ago

9 months of Labour rule

TWENTY YEARS ago this month, Great Britain elected the first majority Labour government in its history.

July 1945 was a time of jubilation for the Labour Party; but it was also a time of reckoning. Their two previous administrations—in 1924 and 1931—had been minority governments, and had been able to blame their failures onto their dependence on Liberal support in the House of Commons.



The Attlee government had no such excuse. They had a massive majority behind them and they were determined to carry out the programme they had cherished for so long. Many Labour M.P.s

said—and perhaps some of them even believed—that the day of Socialism had dawned.

Reality was cruelly different, and it exposed Labour Party theories for what they were. The 1945 government were committed to running British capitalism, and they did this in basically the same way as the Tories would have done.

They fought the working class over wages. They used every weapon they could to break strikes in the docks and the coalfields. They launched the nuclear rearmament programme (which, says the Labour Party now, is based on a discredited nostalgia for outdated imperialism).

Some Labour ministers of those days became famous as political buffoons and failures. Others wore themselves into their graves. British capitalism stood undisturbed. And in the end the electors showed what they thought of Labour's attempts to run the system, by turning them out of office.

By 1964 the memories of Labour government had grown dim enough for the workers to want to give it another try. (...).

Now once again we have a Labour government, and once again they are in the toils. British capitalism is providing them with many problems—financial, economic, international. They are disputing with the working class over wages. Many of their policies—on the Bomb, immigration, taxation—have been reversed.

And one again, like their predecessors in 1945, they are failing to solve the problems of capitalism. As this becomes more and more apparent, Labour Party support is declining, in spite of all their gimmicks and vote catching publicity.

(from editorial, *Socialist Standard*, July 1965)

ACTION REPLAY

Money corrupts the beautiful game

ON THE 27 May seven current FIFA officials were arrested by the Swiss police at the luxury Hotel Baur au Lac in Zurich. They were there to attend the 65th FIFA Congress, scheduled to include the election of the President of FIFA. These executives are expected to be extradited to the United States on suspicion of receiving US\$150 million in bribes.

Part of the investigation, initiated by the FBI, concerns collusion between officials of the continental football bodies for South America (CONMEBOL) and for the Caribbean, Central and North America (CONCACAF) and sports marketing executives seeking to become holders of media and marketing rights for international competitions including FIFA World Cup qualifying tournaments.

The CONCACAF President, Jeffrey Webb, who is also President of the Cayman Islands Football Association, and two sitting FIFA Executive members, Eduardo Li of the Costa Rican Football Federation, and Eugenio Figueredo, formerly of the Uruguayan FA, are amongst those arrested in connection with the investigation.

These arrests concerned alleged



bribery, fraud and money laundering in connection with the awarding of media, marketing and hosting rights for FIFA games. An unnamed sports equipment company—subsequently identified as Nike—is alleged to have paid around \$40 million in bribes to become the sole provider of footwear and equipment to the Brazil national team.

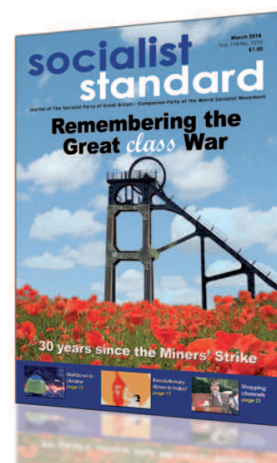
In the wake of this corruption case it was also reported that in 2008, the General Secretary of FIFA, Jerome Valcke, allegedly transferred \$10 million given to FIFA by the South African FA to accounts controlled by Jack Warner, then head of CONCACAF. The payment is a key piece of the US prosecutors' indictment that accuses Warner of taking a bribe in exchange for helping South Africa secure rights to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The payment from the South African FA had been

intended to support football development in the Caribbean. Warner, however, is accused of using \$1.6 million of the South African payment to pay off personal loans and credit card debts.

With the amount of money to be made from televising, marketing and hosting in relation to FIFA games it is not surprising that corruption should thrive. In fact, given capitalism, it would be surprising if it hadn't. Football might be better called the Profitable Game than the Beautiful Game. **KEVIN**

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